

The principle of "equal time" for opposing views to be viewed and heard represents a critical component of democracy. When a company like Sinclair Broadcasting decides to run biased, political programming within days of a major national election, they abuse their civic duty to American citizens who own the airwaves over which Sinclair sends their partisan message.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election clearly violates the principle of providing equal time to opposing viewpoints and opinions.

This results from unrestrained consolidation of major media in the U.S. and clearly illustrates the danger that consolidation represents for free speech and for a healthy and open democracy.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Sinclair's actions show why media ownership rules need to be strengthened to guarantee a diversity of viewpoints and opinions in the media. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

If Sinclair does not provide equal time to supporters of John Kerry for president, their broadcast licenses should be revoked. In turn, those same licenses should be granted to broadcasters who will maintain a politically neutral position by providing equal time to all sides of national political debates.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this very serious matter.